

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 000333

SIPDIS

CAIRO POL FOR MAXSTADT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/13/2013

TAGS: ETTC PARM PREL PTER

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: MANPADS INFORMATION REQUEST

REF: A. STATE 32841

1B. ABUJA 249

1C. 02 ABUJA 720

1D. 02 ABUJA 1131

CLASSIFIED BY HOWARD F. JETER FOR REASON 1.5(D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: The GON maintains a stockpile of several hundred poorly maintained SA-7s and has made efforts to purchase more modern SAMs from Russia and Ukraine. The GON maintains control of MANPADS stocks, but poor security and an active illicit arms trade make theft a very real risk. The GON can be expected to participate in efforts to enhance the security of its MANPADS and other weapons stocks provided the USG or third country picks up the bill. END SUMMARY.

-----  
GENERAL MANPADS SITUATION IN NIGERIA  
-----

12. (C) The GON has a stockpile of several hundred poorly maintained MANPADS. After Russia declined its request for more modern SAMs, the GON contracted to purchase an unknown number of SAMs from Ukraine (REF B). (COMMENT: While the degradation of the GON's SA-7 stockpile makes it less effective against the military aviation the missiles are designed to attack, they would prove more than adequate against slower moving and easier to track civilian aircraft. END COMMENT.)

13. (C) Nigerian MANPADS are under the control of the GON and are stored as ammunition by the Nigerian Armed Services. Security is considered to be lax and highly ineffective. Theft by security personnel or private individuals is possible.

14. (C) The Nigerian small arms black market is very active. Post is unaware of any reports of MANPADS sales on the Nigerian black market. (COMMENT: Post might not be aware of MANPAD availability on the black market. Nigerian military personnel are poorly paid, and a relatively small payoff by an arms trader might be sufficient to suborn a guard. There were rumors after the Ikeja ATD fire and explosion in early 2002 that the fire was set to cover up illicit transfers. These rumors were never substantiated. END COMMENT.)

15. (C) Post is unaware of any Nigerian effort to export MANPADS.

-----  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR GON COOPERATION  
-----

16. (C) The GON sees MANPADS as vital to its national defense and is unlikely to take action to reduce its stockpile.

17. (C) While the GON may state it will take action to control the black/gray arms market, its enforcement mechanisms are too weak to have a significant impact.

18. (C) Without prodding or proctoring, post does not expect the GON to appreciate the gravity of the threat its improperly secured MANPADS pose to civil aviation nor the magnitude of the GON's liability should one of its MANPADS be used in a successful attack.

19. (C) The GON might be amenable to a USG-funded program

that upgraded existing storage facilities to adequate security standards or built entirely new facilities if the USG could allay GON concerns over espionage. In that regard, the GON refused USG offers of assistance, except in three limited cases, in determining the safety of Nigerian ammunition depots after the January 2002 Ikeja disaster because of espionage concerns. Since personnel present a major vulnerability, it would also be necessary for the USG to pay for the training of GON security personnel.

¶10. (U) Appropriate GON contacts for this issue are Minister of Defense T. Y. Danjuma and National Security Advisor Aliyu Mohammed.

¶11. (C) COMMENT: In addition to maintaining its current stocks of MANPADS, the GON will most likely continue to attempt to acquire ever more sophisticated types of MANPADS and other surface-to-air missiles. The GON could accept a USG-funded program to enhance the security of its MANPADS stocks. However, the success of such a program is doubtful since the most serious security concern is the poverty-level wages the GON pays to the soldiers guarding storage sites. Until the GON boosts the pay of those guarding its weapons stockpile, the risk of stolen equipment finding its way to the black market will remain high.

JETER